



**CALFED  
BAY-DELTA  
PROGRAM**

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April 27, 1998

The Honorable Wally Herger  
U.S. House of Representatives  
2433 Rayburn House Office Building  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Representative Herger:

This is in response to your letter of April 9, 1998, regarding the CALFED Bay-Delta Program's Draft Programmatic Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report. You have raised several concerns and requested an extension in the public comment period on the draft EIS/EIR.

As you may be aware, CALFED is a consortium of fifteen different state and federal agencies with legal responsibilities or authorities for activities within the Bay and Delta estuary. Decisions by the CALFED agencies are made in a collective manner by the entire group of agencies. This approach applies to a wide variety of decisions, including those on the content of the Bay-Delta Program, the content of the Programmatic EIS/EIR, and the timing of public comment period on the Programmatic EIS/EIR. I will bring your suggestion for an extension in the comment period to their attention.

More immediately, however, I would like to address the concerns raised in your letter. You have expressed concern about the use of setback levees for flood control. As I understand your letter, one concern is that setback levees would require conversion of thousands of acres of productive farmland into marshes and wetlands and that this conversion would have a negative impact on agricultural employment and commodity production. The draft EIS does indeed identify changes to about 35,000 acres of land as a result of levee changes. Not all of these changes would necessarily remove land from production, however. We are working with agricultural groups to minimize reductions in agricultural production. For example, we are identifying wildlife-friendly agricultural practices that can occur in flood bypasses, so that land can serve multiple purposes.

You have indicated your strong desire for increased management and restoration of upper watersheds. I share that viewpoint. Indeed, in our draft EIS/EIR, we have explicitly

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**CALFED Agencies**

**California**  
The Resources Agency  
Department of Fish and Game  
Department of Water Resources  
California Environmental Protection Agency  
State Water Resources Control Board

**Federal**  
Environmental Protection Agency  
Department of the Interior  
Fish and Wildlife Service  
Bureau of Reclamation  
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers

Department of Agriculture  
Natural Resources Conservation Service  
Department of Commerce  
National Marine Fisheries Service

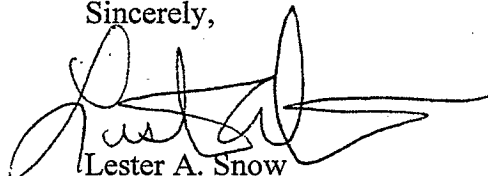
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identified expanded watershed management activities as a program element that should be implemented without regard to the conveyance arrangements that are eventually recommended.

You have also indicated that northern California has needs for offstream water storage. You may be aware that CALFED is working on the over-arching issue of water supply reliability. I believe our *Phase II interim Report* (part of the draft EIS/EIR) demonstrates that we are aware that water supply reliability is a function of both managing demand and augmenting supplies. We believe that supply augmentation may provide multiple benefits, particularly if that augmentation is managed in concert with a "time value of water" concept. But, additional water storage is a controversial topic--many relationships between environmental effects and economic effects, both positive and negative, need to be explored more thoroughly before we can recommend specific quantities or types of supply augmentation.

I hope this information is helpful. Please call me at (916) 657-2666 if you wish to discuss these matters in more detail.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Lester A. Snow", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Lester A. Snow  
Executive Director